

Compression garments for adults with lymphoedema: eligibility, supply and costing. Procedure

July 2021



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Contents

Compression garment selection, fitting and monitoring procedure	4
1. Purpose	4
2. Scope	4
3. Related resources	4
4. Procedures	5
5. Definitions	14
6. Document approval details	Error! Bookmark not defined.
7. Version control	14

Compression garment selection, fitting and monitoring procedure

1. Purpose

This procedure describes the processes for Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) to implement the *Guideline for compression garments for adults with lymphoedema: Eligibility, supply and costing*. This procedure relates specifically to the process of clients accessing new or replacement garments from their local health service.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all Hospital and Health Services. It specifically applies to HHS employees who prescribe compression garments to adults with lymphoedema and the facilities which provide these garments and/or which are responsible for the purchase of these garments.

The procedure does not include recommendations regarding the clinical care of clients with lymphoedema beyond the selection and supply of compression garments.

3. Related resources

Education package

Compression garment, selection, fitting and monitoring education package
<https://ilearn.health.qld.gov.au/d2l/login>

Forms, templates

- [Standing Offer Arrangement: compression garments](#)
- [Clinical prescription / order form for compression garments](#)

Accreditation references

- [Australian Government. Cancer Council. 2013 Lymphoedema – what you need to know](#)
- [Australasian Lymphology Association \(ALA\) position paper on Compression Garments for Lymphoedema](#)
- [Compression Therapy: A position document: International Lymphoedema Framework 2012](#)
- [EWMA Position Document “Understanding Compression Therapy”](#)
- [Indications for medical compression stockings in venous and lymphatic disorders: An evidence-based consensus statement. Phlebology](#)
- [Lymphoedema Framework. Best Practice for the Management of Lymphoedema. International consensus. London: MEP Ltd, 2006](#)
- [National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre. 2008. Review of research evidence on secondary lymphoedema: incidence prevention, risk factors and treatment.](#)
- [Professional guide to compression garment selection for the lower extremity.](#)
- [Template for practice: Compression hosiery in lymphoedema. 2009](#)

- [The Australasian Lymphology Association 2021. What is Lymphoedema?](#)
- [The Diagnosis and Treatment of Peripheral Lymphedema: 2020 Consensus Document of the International Society of Lymphology](#)
- [Wounds UK: Best Practice Statement for compression hosiery](#)

Register

The Australasian Lymphoedema Association's ([ALA Accredited Practitioner](#))

4. Procedure for compression garments for adults with lymphoedema: eligibility, supply and costing

Eligibility to receive compression garments free of charge

- Clients meeting all of the following criteria should be provided with compression garments free of charge:
 - a diagnosis of lymphoedema has been documented by a medical practitioner or a lymphoedema therapist. The diagnosis should be documented in a referral letter, prescription/order form or a Queensland Health medical record
 - aged 16 years or over
 - outpatient or day hospital patient
 - holding one of the following cards:
 - Centrelink Pensioner Card
 - Centrelink Health Care Card
 - permanent resident of Queensland
 - Medicare eligible.
- Clients will be entitled to a maximum of two garments (per body part), in a single supply process and provided with a replacement frequency time period of no less than six months. Replacement garments should be provided based on review of clinical need.
- The HHS may determine local compression garment provision arrangements for clients not meeting all of the above criteria e.g., the HHS may make decisions about the number of garments provided based on clinical need, or the type of concessions accepted based on financial needs of the clients.
- Ineligibility for free garment provision does not exclude clients from accessing other services from a HHS including lymphoedema assessment, assessment for compression garment, therapy intervention, prescription, fitting and problem solving for self-funded garments.

Care provision

- If relevant, a client with a current episode of care requiring compression garment prescription will have the costs of the products/consumables (garments) met by the treating HHS/Cancer Centre as part of that episode of care (See note 1).

- On discharge from one HHS to another HHS (i.e. from Cancer Centre or Lymphoedema Service to the facility closest to the client's residence), care should be transferred to the local facility through a documented referral process. The referral should include details of the most recent medical referral, clinical prescription, garments provided, and the recommended interval for next review.
- When a client is transferred or referred from one service to another, the receiving clinician who provides compression garment care will organise an assessment for compression garment prescription, fit and review with the client at an interval negotiated (and documented in the referral) with the referring clinician. The local service is responsible for receiving, reviewing, and processing the garment prescription form as well as ordering and paying for the garment.
- The Compression Garment Selection, Fitting and Monitoring Service Model should be implemented in local services to support access and provision of service.
- Clinical prescriptions for lymphoedema garments from non-Queensland Health HHS providers shall be accepted if the client eligibility criteria are met. Non-Queensland Health HHS providers are to send the prescription/order form to the local service to be actioned according to the local intake process.
- Queensland Health and non-Queensland Health HHS providers in HHS catchments that use the Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) intake process for lymphoedema garment orders, should register to use [MASS-eAPPLY](#) and then order garments through MASS.
- Fit, education and review of the garment is the responsibility of the prescribing clinician (public or private).
- Where assessment identifies the client's presentation does not meet the criteria for 'stable lymphoedema', it is the responsibility of the clinician to advise and provide, or assist the client to access, a service that can meet the client's clinical needs.

Supply

- Garment supply allowances will reflect clinical need and efficient use of resources.
- The intent of these principles is to manage costs and maximise the efficient use of compression garment resources for the community.
- Supply of the compression garment to the client by the local service will not be influenced by whether the client has a current episode of care in the department supplying the garment or with another provider.
- Supplying the sourced compression garment to the client may include:
 - providing the garment directly to the client as part of a clinical consultation undertaken in a HHS.
 - providing the garment to the referring non-Queensland Health health service provider.
- Clients will be entitled to a maximum of two garments (per body part), in a single supply process provided with a replacement frequency time period of no less than of six months. Replacement garments should be provided based on clinical need.
- All clinicians should prescribe ready-to-wear garments as a first preference where the clinician considers a ready-to-wear option to provide the same or better treatment effect to a custom-made garment.
- Where a custom garment is required, **only** one should be ordered in the first instance. When fitted and clinically assessed as suitable, a second garment can be ordered.

- Where the fitting of a standard garment is not appropriate (due to shape, difficulty with donning or doffing, or poor tolerance), a wrap or night-time garment can be considered based on clinical need.
- If a client requires two day-time and two night-time garments, the HHS will provide for two garments per body part i.e. the HHS may pay for two day-time garments and the client will pay for the two night-time garments.
- Garments are to be selected from the [Standing Order Agreement \(SOA QH 742\)](#). The SOA is available to Queensland Health prescribers. For non-Queensland Health prescribers, all garments listed on the SOA are detailed in the prescription/order ([Word 97-2003 compatible](#) or [Word 2016 / Mac compatible](#)) form for compression garment provision.
- Clients without a diagnosis of lymphoedema including those for prophylactic or travel use, are not entitled to the supply of compression garments.
- To ensure ongoing care and management, clients shall return to the referring health care professional for garment fitting, to receive education and to organise a review. A minimum six-monthly review is recommended.
- The provision of lymphoedema garments should be included in a client's NDIS package if eligible.

Costs

Unless otherwise determined by the HHS providing the compression garment, ongoing direct costs (beyond the initial period following discharge) related to the garment shall be borne by the "residential" HHS of the client.

Notes in relation to process:

- A client may potentially have a current lymphoedema episode of care, away from their local service if they:
 - are accessing cancer treatment in another location and it is more convenient to access lymphoedema care in the same facility (e.g. client has relocated from Weipa to Cairns for duration of radiotherapy and accesses lymphoedema services through Cairns Hospital allied health).
 - do not have stable lymphoedema and/or require more intensive or complex care requirements than are available through local services such as treatment with a lymphoedema therapist.

5. Definition of terms

Term	Definition / Explanation / Details	Source
Assessment for compression garment	Means undertaking a process of subjective and objective information gathering for the purpose of decision-making regarding the sourcing and supply of a compression garment. The minimum components of the assessment for compression garment are described in <i>Compression garment selection, fitting and monitoring education resource</i> , Section 1: Assessment Module and includes history taking with a focus on changes in signs	Adapted from Guidelines for writing clinical task instructions, 2014 Queensland Health. 2014. Compression garment, selection, fitting and

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	<p>and symptoms since the previous supply of a garment including the presence of contra-indications and precautions, information in the clinical prescription and client reports of tolerance/issues with current garment, and an objective assessment of the affected limb including circumferential measurements using a standardised measurement process.</p> <p>NOTE: A comprehensive lymphoedema assessment by a lymphoedema therapist should form part of an episode of care for lymphoedema. An assessment for compression garment is not the same as a comprehensive lymphoedema assessment undertaken for the purpose of diagnosis and development of a comprehensive lymphoedema intervention plan.</p>	<p>monitoring education package (available at: https://ilearn.health.qld.gov.au/d2l/login)</p>
Cancer centre	<p>Facility providing tertiary level cancer services including surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy.</p>	<p>Queensland Health, Compression Garment Steering Group</p>
Clinical prescription	<p>Means a written description of specific parameters of compression garment style, class, fit and fabric size for the purpose of sourcing through a supplier/vendor. The prescription/order form may be used for this purpose or the prescription/order form for compression garment provision.</p> <p>Clinical prescriptions for compression garments should be made by appropriately trained and experienced clinicians who provide compression garment care (including public and private sector practitioners) as defined below.</p> <p>Clinical prescriptions should be for ready to wear garments, unless custom-made garments are clinically indicated.</p> <p>All providers are responsible for providing prescriptions that are current.</p> <p>Garments are available in various compression levels to meet the needs of different clients and can be ordered via manufacturers and suppliers under SOA.</p>	<p>Queensland Health, Compression Garment Steering Group</p>
Clinician who provides compression garment care	<p>A clinician who meets the professional and training eligibility criteria as detailed below:</p> <p>Professional eligibility criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queensland Health physiotherapist, occupational therapist or podiatrist registered with Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). <p>OR</p>	<p>Queensland Health, Compression Garment Steering Group</p>

Term	Definition / Explanation / Details	Source
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-governmental, community service organisation or private practitioner physiotherapist, occupational therapist, podiatrist registered nurse or medical doctor registered with Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). <p>Training eligibility criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holds Level 1 lymphoedema training certificate or Foundational module plus relevant regional module/s accredited by the Australasian Lymphology Association (ALA), and • Eligible to register as an ALA Accredited lymphoedema Practitioner, with recency of practice by demonstration of clinical experience in compression garment prescription within the previous two years, and • Continued professional development of 40 points in the previous two years as set out in the ALA Accredited Lymphoedema Practitioner Program Continuing Professional Development Policy <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed the Compression garment, selection, fitting and monitoring education package https://ilearn.health.qld.gov.au/d2l/login with the support of a lymphoedema therapist including use of telehealth, implementation resources and governance processes. 	
<p>Compression garment review</p>	<p>Means to examine a client’s response to the prescribed compression garment following supply. Includes information collected from client (supplemented by information from carers or other members of the multi-disciplinary team).</p> <p>Review differs from “re-assessment” as the purpose is primarily to gain information on the specific response to the intervention (garment supply), rather than more broadly gathering clinical information for the purpose of developing or modifying a diagnosis or care plan as part of a current episode of care.</p>	<p>Adapted from Guidelines for writing clinical task instructions, 2014</p>
<p>Compression Garment Selection, Fitting and Monitoring Service Model</p>	<p>The Compression Garment Selection, Fitting and Monitoring Service Model (“the service model”) involves compression garment selection, fitting and monitoring provided by occupational therapists, physiotherapists and podiatrists who have not completed a formal lymphoedema training program (i.e. Level 1 or 2 course), or Foundational module plus relevant regional module/s accredited by the Australasian Lymphology Association, but have completed, the <i>Compression</i></p>	<p>Queensland Health (2015). The Compression Garment Selection, Fitting and Monitoring Project for</p>

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	<p><i>garment, selection, fitting and monitoring education program</i> https://ilearn.health.qld.gov.au/d2l/login with professional support of lymphoedema therapists, supported by telehealth (where relevant), implementation resources and governance processes. The service model includes a training model that pairs occupational therapists, physiotherapists and podiatrists with a lymphoedema therapist. The online education program covering pathophysiology, assessment and management of lymphoedema, compression garment prescription, monitoring and care accompanies one-on-one coaching sessions. Telehealth can be used to support the supervised practice stage of the training program and can be used if required in the post-training phase if the physiotherapist, occupational therapist or podiatrist requires professional support from their lymphoedema therapist coach. Therapists who have completed this package can undertake compression garment selection, fitting and monitoring for patients with stable lymphoedema.</p>	<p>Malignancy related Lymphoedema Project Completion Report</p>
Compression garments	<p>Compression garments are firmly fitting elastic garments which can help to reduce the swelling associated with lymphoedema. Garments will be prescribed and replaced at the discretion of the treating therapist. It is recommended that they be replaced every 6 months (2 per affected body part).</p>	<p>Queensland Health, Compression Garment Steering Group</p>
Custom made compression garments	<p>Also referred to as ‘made to measure’, these garments are made to the specifications of the client. These garments are more expensive than ready to wear garments and may take from 5 days to 4 weeks to be manufactured and delivered.</p>	<p>Queensland Health, Compression Garment Steering Group</p>
Education	<p>Means to provide information required to allow a client or carer to optimise benefit and minimise risks associated with wearing the supplied compression garment. Education also includes information on the care of the garment and must include information and practice of donning and doffing the garment including relevant aids. Education should be broadly consistent with the <i>Lymphoedema compression garment patient information handout</i> and <i>Compression garment selection, fitting and monitoring education resource</i>, Section 1 (at https://ilearn.health.qld.gov.au/d2l/login)</p>	<p>Queensland Health, Compression Garment Steering Group</p>

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Episode of care	In the context of this document, means the client has a current episode of care for lymphoedema in a Queensland Health facility. An episode of care is a phase of treatment. An episode of care ends when the principal clinical intent changes or when the client is formally separated from the facility. An episode of care for lymphoedema may include comprehensive lymphoedema assessment and interventions such as bandaging, massage, LASER and exercise programs. This care should be led by a lymphoedema therapist. However, the specific service model used to deliver this care is determined by each Hospital and Health Service with due regard to clinical governance, quality and safety.	Queensland Health, Compression Garment Steering Group
Fit/fitting	Means an occasion of service provided for the purpose of supplying and checking the fit of a compression garment.	Queensland Health, Compression Garment Steering Group
Generalist therapist	Physiotherapist, occupational therapist or podiatrists, who has not completed a formal lymphoedema training program (e.g. Level 1 or 2 course or Foundational module plus relevant regional module accredited by the Australasian Lymphology Association), but has undertaken, or is currently undertaking the <i>Compression garment, selection, fitting and monitoring education package at https://ilearn.health.qld.gov.au/d2l/login</i>	Queensland Health, Compression Garment Steering Group
Local intake process	The criteria for intake. Each Hospital and Health Service is responsible for identifying to the public the process for how the client enters the local service through the local intake process for compression garment provision e.g. GP referral, referral from private provider for supply of garment, self- referral, transfer of care following discharge from cancer centre. This includes the local Hospital and Health Service identifying the relevant contact point for provision of compression garments.	Queensland Health, Compression Garment Steering Group
Local service	The Queensland Health facility closest to the client's place of residence which has an occupational therapy or physiotherapy service (including services delivered to the facility through telehealth, outreach, public-private partnership or other models).	Queensland Health, Compression Garment Steering Group
Lymphoedema	Lymphoedema is the accumulation of excessive amounts of protein-rich (lymphatic) fluid resulting in swelling of one or more regions of the body. This is due to a mechanical failure of the lymphatic system and	Australasian Lymphology Association

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	<p>occurs when the demand for lymphatic drainage exceeds the capacity of the lymphatic circulation. The condition usually affects the limb(s) although it may also involve the trunk, breast, head and neck or genital area.</p> <p>The diagnosis of lymphoedema requires exclusion of any other cause and/or may require identification through lymphoscintigraphy (L/S/G). In cases where a lymphoedema diagnosis is not clear, evaluation by a specialist medical practitioner in the field and treatment of the primary condition is recommended so that treatment is fully optimised.</p> <p>Compression should be seen as a supportive measure and one component in the management of lymphoedema.</p>	
Lymphoedema assessment	<p>A comprehensive lymphoedema assessment, by a therapist who has completed a Level 1 or 2 course or Foundational module plus relevant regional module/s accredited by the Australasian Lymphology Association and is eligible to register as an Accredited ALA Lymphoedema Practitioner, should form part of an episode of care for lymphoedema. An assessment for compression garment is not the same as a comprehensive lymphoedema assessment undertaken for the purpose of diagnosis and development of a comprehensive lymphoedema intervention plan.</p>	<p>Queensland Health. 2021. Compression garment, selection, fitting and monitoring education package (at https://ilearn.health.qld.gov.au/d2l/login)</p>
Lymphoedema service	<p>Means a health service which can deliver primary care in relation to lymphoedema. One or more lymphoedema therapists shall be part of the service model but need not directly provide the service to the client. The model of service delivery is determined by the Hospital and Health Service and may include services provided at a Cancer Centre or local service, directly by a lymphoedema therapist or by a generalist therapist with supervision or support (depending on the generalist therapist's training and scope of practice in relation to lymphoedema) from a lymphoedema therapist. The service model may be supported by telehealth, outreach, public-private partnership or other models.</p>	<p>Compression Garment, Selection, Fitting and Monitoring Steering Group</p>
Lymphoedema therapist	<p>Clinicians who meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holders of Level 1 Lymphoedema Training Certificate or Foundational module plus relevant regional module accredited by the Australasian Lymphology Association (ALA), and • Eligible to register as an ALA Accredited Lymphoedema Practitioner, with recency of practice by demonstration of clinical experience in 	<p>The Australasian Lymphology Association's Accredited Lymphoedema Practitioner Program 2020</p>

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	<p>compression garment prescription within the previous two years, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued Professional Development of 40 points in the previous two years as set out in the ALA Accredited Lymphoedema Practitioner Program Continuing Professional Development Policy. 	
Ready to wear compression garments	<p>Also referred to as 'off the shelf', these garments are available in a fixed range of sizes and suitable for most clients in the management of lymphoedema. All prescribers should prescribe ready-to-wear garments as a first preference, where the clinician considers the ready-to-wear option to provide the same or better treatment effect to a custom-made garment.</p>	Queensland Health, Compression Garment Steering Group
Source	<p>For clients meeting the eligibility criteria under Section 4 of the <i>Guideline for compression garments for adults with lymphoedema: Eligibility, supply and costing</i>, means the health service directly sources (orders) the garment from the supplier for the client including meeting the costs of the garment.</p>	<i>Queensland Health, 2021, Guideline for compression garments for adults with lymphoedema: Eligibility, supply and costing.</i>
Stable lymphoedema	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncomplicated lymphoedema. Swelling affecting a limb(s) which has been present for over 3 months and is not relieved by bed rest or elevation. Subcutaneous tissues are soft and normal shape of the limb preserved. Swelling does not affect the head and neck, trunk or genital regions of the body. The lymphoedema is confined to one or two limbs and does not extend to the proximal root of the limb. The subcutaneous tissue is predominantly soft and/or pits on pressure in a small and localised area. The affected limb has maintained a relatively normal shape. The skin on the affected limb is healthy and intact. There is no arterial insufficiency. There is no known malignancy in the quadrant of the trunk which is adjacent to the affected limb. Renal, cardiac, liver and thyroid problems have been excluded as contributing factors or if present, these conditions are well controlled. The following characteristics would indicate that the client's condition is not consistent with stable lymphoedema: 	<p>British Lymphology Society, 2016, Population needs assessment.</p> <p>Queensland Health, 2021, Compression garment, selection, fitting and monitoring education package</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – new presentation of oedema/lymphoedema, not previously assessed or treated by a lymphoedema therapist – recurrent cellulosic infections in previous twelve months – history of infection of lymphoedematous limb requiring antibiotics – fluctuating and increasing circumferential measures – secondary skin changes and lymphorrhea – oedema extends to root of limb and affects abdomen or trunk – other secondary complications e.g. seroma, scarring issues, cording impacting on patient comfort or function. 	

6. Document approval details

Document custodian

Director, Allied Health Professions' Office of Queensland, Clinical Excellence Division.

Approval officer

Liza-Jane McBride, Chief Allied Health Officer, Allied Health Professions' Office of Queensland, Clinical Excellence Division.

Approval date: 28 July 2021

7. Version control

Version	Date	Prepared by	Comments
1	30/10/14	AHPOQ	
2	24/08/16	AHPOQ	<p>The amendments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inclusion of physiotherapists and occupational therapists who have completed the compression garment, selection, fitting and monitoring education package as clinicians who provide compression garment care. • describing the compression garment service model that involves compression garment, selection, fitting and monitoring provided by generalist occupational therapists and physiotherapists. • updating links and forms, including the prescription/order form.

Version	Date	Prepared by	Comments
3	5/10/17	AHPOQ	<p>The amendments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expanding the eligibility criteria to include all adult clients diagnosed with lymphoedema (malignancy and non- malignancy related lymphoedema). • inclusion of Queensland Health podiatrists who have completed the <i>Compression garment selection, fitting and monitoring education package</i> as eligible providers of compression garment care. • inclusion of non-Queensland Health physiotherapists, occupational therapists and podiatrists who have completed the <i>Compression garment selection, fitting and monitoring education package</i> as clinicians who can provide compression garment care.
4	21/06/2021	AHPOQ	<p>The amendments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • alignment to the latest evidence and clinical practice standards • inclusion of wraps and night-time garments as available provisions • clarifying statements to support understanding of eligibility criteria • name change to the Procedure to support consistency with the Guideline.